

Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 01948 01 OF 02 091954Z

64

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 1948

E.O. 11652: GDS 12/31/82

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: NATO ALERT SYSTEM

REF: A. USNATO 1691

B. MNC'S ALERT SYSTEM (S1/72)

C. SHAPE LETTER FEB 7, 1974, SUBJ: STATUS OF
NEGOTIATIONS WITH NATIONAL AUTHORITIES ON THE
MNC'S ALERT SYSTEM

D. THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM (MC 67/3)

SUMMARY: REF A DISCUSSED SEVERAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT SHORT-COMINGS REVEALED DURING EXERCISE HILEX-6 AND INDICATED THAT MISSION COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD FOLLOW ON THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM. THIS MESSAGE DESCRIBES CERTAIN BASIC DEFICIENCIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SYSTEM AND RECOMMENDS A COURSE OF ACTION FOR ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON COMMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. HILEX-6 PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE MNC'S ALERT SYSTEM (REF B) FUNCTION BETWEEN MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS (MNCS) THE MILITARY COMMITTEE (MC), THE DEFENSE PLANNING COMMITTEE (DPC), AND CAPITALS. IN OUR VIEW, REINFORCED BY HILEX-6 THE PRESENT SYSTEM HAS PROBLEMS FALLING INTO TWO BROAD ASPECTS.

SECRET

PAGE 02 NATO 01948 01 OF 02 091954Z

A. THE SYSTEM IS TOO COMPLICATED AND MAY HINDER MNC'S EFFORTS TO EFFECT TIMELY COORDINATED IMPROVEMENT OF THE MILITARY POSTURE OF ALLIANCE NATIONS. THE ROLE OF THE DPC IN THE ALERT PROCESS IS EXCESSIVE. IT IS SO INUNDATED BY SHEER NUMBERS OF INDIVIDUAL

MEASURES OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE THAT IT IS UNABLE TO FOCUS ON THE LARGER ISSUES. THIS PREVENTS THE DPC NATIONS FROM PERFORMING THEIR ESSENTIAL ROLE OF FURMULATING A BROAD STRATEGIC APPRAISAL AND GIVING GENERAL GUIDANCE TO MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

2. THE STAGE OF SIMPLE ALERT PROVIDES AN EXAMPLE OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SYSTEM.

A. THIS STAGE CONTAINS 68 INDIVIDUAL MEASURES DEALING WITH A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS, MANY OF WHICH ARE NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT OF MILITARY POSTURE. IN REQUESTING AUTHORITY TO DECLARE THIS STAGE, OR INDIVIDUAL MEASURES THEREOF, THE MNCS CAN LOSE VALUABLE TIME TO REACT TO WARNING IN THE PROCESS OF REQUEST, MC CONSIDERATION, DPC CONSULTATION (WITH REFERENCE TO CAPITALS), AND FINAL APPROVAL . AFTER DECLARATION, THE MNCS MUST THAN SORT OUT THE IMPLEMENTATION AS CATEGORIZED BY NATION IN THE STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS (REF C) AND REPORTED IN ALERT IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS.

B. AGAIN REFERRING TO THE EXAMPLE OF SOMPLE ALERT, THE 68 MEASURES IN THIS STAGE ARE DERIVED FROM THE 23 REQUIRED SIMPLE ALERT ACTIONS SET FORTH IN REFD, ANNEX C. SOME OF THESE REQUIRED ACTIONS, SUCH AS "INCREASE INTELLIGENCE COL-LECTION EFFORTS;" OR "PREPARE TO TAKE KNOWN ENEMY AGENTS INTO CUSTODY;" COULD EITHER BE REDUCED TO THE STATE OF MILITARY VIGILANCE OR SHIFTED FROM THE AOERT SYSTEM TO AN MNC DIRECTIVE ON THE SUBJECT NOT REQUIRING APPROVAL OF HIGHER AUTHORITY. SIMILARLY, SOME OF THE MEASURES THEMSELVES COULD BE REORGANIZED. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME OF THE 21 SIMPLE ALERT MEASURES IN THE OPERATIONS AREA (SOA THROUGH SOW) COULD BE COMBINED; OTHERS COULD BE SHIFTED TO THE STATE OF MILITARY VIGILANCE; AND OTHERS, OR PARTS OF OTHERS, COULD BE DROPPED. MISSION NOTES THAT THESE 21 MEASURES SUPPORT APPROXIMATELY 11 ACTIONS REQUIRED BY REFD. THE REMAINING 47 SIMPLE ALERT MEASURES SUPPORT THE OTHER 12 REQUIRED ACTIONS. THIS FURTHER SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY OF COMBINING, SHIFTING, OR ELIMINATING ACTIONS AND MEASURES TO REDUCE THE TOTAL NUMBER.

SECRET

PAGE 03 NATO 01948 01 OF 02 091954Z

3. THE ALERT SYSTEM NEEDS SIMPLIFICATION--PARTICULARLY THROUGH A REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL MEASURES PROVIDED FOR. THIS WOULD FACILITATE GREATER UNIFORMITY IN NATIONAL RESPONSES TO DECLARATION OF ALERT. THE LAST REVISION OF THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM(REFD) OCCURRED IN 1971 AS THE RESULT OF A REPORT TO THE DPC BY A JOINT WORKING GROUP (DPC/D(71)23 OF OCT. 15, 1971). THE REVISIONS DID NOT PRODUCE ANY FUNDAMENTAL CHALGE IN THE SYSTEM BUT DID ELIMINATE AMBIGUITIES, ANOMALIES AND INCONSISTENCIES. THE REPORT DID NOTE THE DESIRABILITY, HOWEVER, OF REEXAMINING THE SYSTEM SUBSEQUENT TO FURTHER HIGH-LEVEL EXERCISE EXPERIENCE. MISSION BELIEVES THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR SUCH REEXAMINATION AND THAT IT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY APPROPRIATE MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

4. THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY STAFF IS INVESTIGATING WARNING TIME AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT LESSONS FOR NATO RESULTING FROM THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. THESE INVESTIGATIONS COULD RESULT IN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM. THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF IS ALSO PREPARING A DRAFT REPORT TO THE DPC ON HILEX-6 THAT WILL FIRST BE CONSIDERED IN THE COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND EXERCISE COMMITTEE. THE REPORT TO THE DCP WILL PROVIDE A USEFUL MEANS FOR OUTLINING THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM WE DISCUSSED IN THIS MESSAGE, AND FOR RECOMMENDING THAT THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES TAKE THEM INTO CONSIDERATION IN DRAFTING A REVISION TO MC 67/3.

SECRET

PAGE 01 NATO 01948 02 OF 02 091855Z

64

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 USNATO 1948

5. THE PROPOSE OF THE ALERT SYSTEM IS TO BRING ABOUT THE PROGRESSIVE TRANSITION OF MILITARY POSTURE FROM A PEACETIME TO WARTIME FOOTING. IN THIS PROCESS THE DPC MEETING SHOULD ACT ON THE DECLARATION

OF A GENERAL CATEGORY OF ALERT STATUS BUT IT MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THEM

TO BE CALLED ON TO APPROVE EACH INDIVIDUAL MEASURE PROPOSED WITHIN THE CATEGORY. DPC NATIONS SHOULD, HOWEVER, RETAIN A RIGHT TO APPROVE INDIVIDUAL MEASURES THAT HAVE POLITICAL IMPACT OR THAT MIGHT HEIGHTEN TENSION OR INCREASE THE PROSPECT OF CONFRONTATION OR CONFLICT. THE MEASURES AS NOW WRITTEN PROVIDE A CHECK LIST TO MNC'S AND SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS AS WELL AS REQUESTING ACTIONS OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES. THIS CHECK LIST PROCEDURE IS UNDOUBTEDLY OF VALUE TO MNC'S AND SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS BUT IT DOES HAVE THE EFFECT OF BRINGING TOO MANY DETAILS BEFORE THE DPC NATIONS.

6. IN CONSIDERING THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM, WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF A KEY LESSON FROM THE MIDDLE EAST WAR: USE OF WARNING TIME. NATO'S COMPLEX ALERT SYSTEM, AT LEAST AS PLAYED IN HILEX-6, COULD INHIBIT RATHER THAN FACILITATES THE BEST

USE OF WARNING TIME. THIS IN TURN COULD LOWER NATO'S DETERRENCE AND REDUCE COMBAT STRENGTH DURING THE FIRST CRITICAL HOURS OR DAYS OF A CRISIS. ACTIONS TAKEN TO MAKE THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM MORE EFFECIENT SHOULD THEREFORE BE REGARDED AS IMPORTANT OR
SECRET

PAGE 02 NATO 01948 02 OF 02 091855Z

ALMOST SO AS NATO CONVENTIONAL FORCE IMPROVEMENTS, A MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

7. MISSION REQUESTS WASHINGTON COMMENT ON THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM IN THE LIGHT OF THESE OBSERVATIONS. IF WASHINGTON AGREES, WE WOULD RECOMMEND SEEKING AN OVERHAUL OF THE ALERT SYSTEM AND REDEFINITION OF THE ROLE OF THE DPC NATIONS IN THE SYSTEM. THE GOAL WOULD BE TO REFINE THE SYSTEM SUFFICIENTLY SO THAT ALL UNNECESSARY COMPLEXITIES ARE REMOVED, THEREBY INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF ACHIEVING AN ADEQUATE HANDLING OF IT BY THE 14 NATIONS INVOLVED IN A PERIOD OF TENSION.
RUMSFELD.

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